

27th ICOM General Conference 2025

A guide for ICOM National Committees to apply



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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Presentation of ICOM

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) is the only global museum association in the world. It provides museums and museum professionals with national, regional and international platforms of dialogue and exchange of ethical standards and innovative practices

Since it was established in 1946, ICOM has been committed to the protection and promotion of museums and the heritage with which they are entrusted; natural and cultural, present and future, tangible and intangible. It also advocates the crucial role that museums play in the sustainable development of societies as unique sources of information, inspiration and insight.

Today, ICOM is a worldwide network made up of more than 46.500 members representing 138 countries and territories, grouped into 118 National Committees. It also fosters six Regional Alliances and 32 International Committees dedicated to various museum specialties.

The International Committees are ICOM's think-tanks, bringing together passionate individuals that work on a voluntary basis to further research and advance knowledge in their areas of expertise. Finally, our Standing Committees deal with subjects that are relevant to ICOM, such as the museum definition, disaster risk management and ethical issues. In total, our committees organise around 200 conferences and workshops around the world every year.

The values and principles shared by ICOM and the international museum community are encapsulated in the ICOM Code of Ethics. It is officially recognised as the main international ethical standard for museums, as it sets minimum standards for professional practice and the performance of museums, and a number of countries have included key concepts from the ICOM Code of Ethics in their national legislation.

As the main representative of the global museum community in international forums, ICOM advocates policies that will make the cultural heritage field thrive. It also publishes position statements on current museum-related issues such as the independence of museums or the need of adequate public funding.

Website: <http://icom.museum>

Presentation of the ICOM General Conference

ICOM's General Conference is a world-renowned cultural hub, which brings museum professionals together to discuss the issues that museums face and create innovative solutions. Every three years since 1948, ICOM invites the international museum community to focus on a significant theme, which fosters cultural exchange, promotes international cooperation and inspires local action to ensure that museums continue their public and social mission.

Following 25 successful editions, in locations such as Rio de Janeiro to Kyoto, ICOM's flagship conference attracts around 4,500 participants from all over the world including renowned speakers and world-class experts that come together to attend debates, round tables, panels, networking events and cultural activities.

The ICOM General Conference will also host the International Museum Fair and EXPO Forum, which presents state-of-the-art technology and allows participants to explore the latest technological advances for museums. The Fair provides a unique opportunity for tech companies to display innovative solutions to a global audience of heritage and museum experts.

For participants, the conference is also an opportunity to visit local museums and to take part in activities that provide a better understanding and appreciation of the host country's culture.

To mark the official launch of the General Conference, a special International Symposium is held one year in advance, which brings 200 international experts together to discuss the conference theme.

Conference Format

The ICOM General Conference is a seven (7) day event, which preceded one year before by a two (2) day International Symposium.

The 27th ICOM General Conference will have a new format. The introduction of a modular fee policy will allow participants to customize their personal conference programme from a minimum length of one (1) to a maximum of seven (7) days with a range of options available.

The General Conference programme has five (5) main elements: the scientific and social programme, statutory meetings and Open Forum for Resolutions, Museum Fair and Expo Forum and the election of the ICOM Executive Board and Advisory Council. Each day of the conference will be characterized by one or more of these elements.

- **Day 1 and Day 5**

The first and the last day of the General Conference are dedicated to the ICOM statutory meetings and separate meetings of the ICOM Committees.

Admission

ICOM members may only attend the activities on Day 1 and Day 5, if they hold a 7-day ICOM Individual Members pass, 7-day ICOM Institutional Members pass or a 7-day ICOM Students pass.

- **Day 2, Day 3, Day 4**

From the second to the fourth day (Day 2, Day 3, Day 4), the scientific programme and the Museum Fair will take place during the day, with the social programme in the evening. The election of the ICOM Executive Board will take place on the third and fourth day of the event.

Admission

ICOM members and non-members may attend the activities on Day 2, Day 3 and Day 5. Those holding a 7-day, 3-day or 1-day pass are admitted on these days. Accompanying persons may participate in the social programme and the Museum Fair.

- **Day 6 and Day 7**

The Off-site meetings and excursions are scheduled for the sixth and seventh days.

Admission

ICOM members and non-members who hold a 7-day pass or an accompanying person pass can participate in off-site meetings and excursions. Those with a 1-day pass or a 3-day pass can purchase a separate ticket for the off-site meetings and/or excursions.

ICOM reserves the right to modify the General Conference programme and all related requirements at any time and in any way deemed necessary by ICOM.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM – DETAILED PROGRAMME		
Day 1	Morning	Scientific congress
	Lunch break	
	Afternoon	Scientific congress
	Evening	Reception
Day 2	All day	Excursions

27 th ICOM GENERAL CONFERENCE – PROGRAMME AT GLANCE						
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Statutory Meetings	Scientific programme Social programme Museum Fair and Expo Forum			Statutory meetings	Off-site meetings	Excursions

27 th ICOM GENERAL CONFERENCE – DETAILED PROGRAMME		
Day 1	Morning	Advisory Council Meeting
	Afternoon	Advisory Council Meeting
		Open Forum for Resolutions
		Separate Meetings of the National Committees
		Separate Meetings of the International Committees
		International Committees Board Meetings
	Evening	Free
Day 2	Morning	Opening Ceremony
		Keynote speech
		Plenary session
		Workshops
	Lunch break	Networking sessions
	Afternoon	Opening of the Museum Trade Fair
		Panel
		Meetings of the International, National and Standing Committees, Working Groups and Regional Alliances.
	Evening	Opening Party
Day 3	Morning	Keynote speech
		Plenary session
		Workshops
		Museum Trade Fair
	Lunch break	Networking sessions
	Afternoon	Panel
		Meetings of the International, National and Standing Committees, Working Groups and Regional Alliances Museum Trade Fair
	Evening	Social events

Day 4	Morning	Keynote speech Plenary session Workshops Museum Trade Fair
	Lunch break	Networking sessions
	Afternoon	Panel Meetings of the International, National and Standing Committees, Working Groups and Regional Alliances Museum Trade Fair
	Evening	Social events
Day 5	Morning	Extraordinary General Assembly General Assembly
	Afternoon	Advisory Council Meeting
	Evening	Closing Ceremony Closing party
Day 6	All day	Off-site meetings
Day 7	All day	Excursions

A description of each type of session is listed below. For technical specifications, please see Appendix 2.

Type of sessions in the order that it will take place	Description and technical details
STATUTORY MEETINGS and OPEN FORUM FOR RESOLUTIONS	
Advisory Committee meeting	The Chairpersons of the National and International Committees, Regional Alliances, and Affiliated Organisations (or their appointed representatives) come together to advise the Executive Board and the General Assembly on matters and activities that relate to ICOM's activities such as ICOM's policies, programmes, procedures and finances.
General Assembly	The General Assembly is ICOM's supreme decision-making and legislative body. It approves the annual policy report, strategic plan, membership fees and accounts of the previous year. It also makes decisions on eventual items of importance proposed by the Executive Board, the Advisory Council, National and International Committees and Regional Alliances.
Extraordinary General Assembly	The Extraordinary General Assembly votes on the adoption of amendments to the Statutes.
Open Forum for Resolutions	The General Conference may propose resolutions arising from its discussions on challenges that the global museum community is facing today. These discussions take place during the Open Forum. The resolutions are approved by the General Assembly.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME	
Keynote Speeches	Keynote speeches are addresses given to set the tone and summarize the main messages or themes of the ICOM General Conference. Some 3500 to 4500 participants will attend these sessions in the main hall or live-streaming rooms.
Plenary and panel sessions	Plenaries and panels are sessions on current topics of interest to the museum community. Some 3500 to 4500 participants will attend these sessions in the main hall or live-streaming rooms.
Workshops and roundtables	Workshops and roundtables are sessions with a limited number of participants, at which participants take part in discussions or produce work on specific themes related to the museum profession.
Networking sessions	Networking sessions offers new ICOM members the opportunity to find out more about the organisation and how it operates, and for emerging professionals to meet experienced museum professionals for career mentoring.
Sessions of ICOM Committee and Working Groups	The ICOM International and National Committees, Working Groups and Standing Committees hold meetings and activities later in the week. More than 230 sessions were organised at the last General Conference.
Off-site meetings	The ICOM International Committees hold their own annual meetings in the host city or region, there are referred to as “off-site meetings”
Sessions proposed by other ICOM bodies and partners	Regional Alliances and ICOM Official Partners can organise meetings related to the theme of the General Conference.
SOCIAL PROGRAMME	
Opening and Closing ceremonies	Opening and closing ceremonies mark the official beginning and end of the ICOM General Conference and should convey the objectives and principles of ICOM and reflect the theme of the ICOM General Conference.
Opening and Closing parties	Parties to celebrate the beginning and end of the ICOM General Conference.
Social events and excursions	Social events and excursions take place throughout the General Conference are opportunities for participants to meet in a social setting and discover the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the host country.
Pre- and post-conference activities	Activities that take place before and after the ICOM General Conference and allow small groups of participants to discover the host country and its culture.
OTHER EVENTS	
Additional events	The ICOM National Committees may organise off-site receptions at their consulates or other institutions.
FRINGE PROGRAMME	

Museums in the host city and the surrounding regions may organise thematic events, special exhibitions and guided tours during the General Conference.

MUSEUM FAIR AND EXPO FORUM

A three days institutional fair and expo forum presenting innovations and progresses that have been made in the museums field and profession of museums.

ICOM EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ADVISORY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

During the 27th ICOM General Conference elections will be held to elect the ICOM Executive Board and the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Council for the term 2025-2028.

Key figures

Participants

ICOM members and non-members can attend the General Conference. ICOM General Conferences usually welcome between 3,500 and 4,500 participants. More than 120 nationalities were present at each edition of the General Conference (100 in Seoul 2004, 117 in Vienna 2007, 122 in Shanghai 2010, 103 in Rio 2013, 120 in Kyoto 2019). The geographic distribution of the participants at the last six conferences is shown below:

	Seoul 2004	Vienna 2007	Shanghai 2010	Rio 2013	Milan 2016	Kyoto 2019
Europe	32%	62%	53%	36%	65%	26%
Asia	51%	17%	23%	15%	20%	55%
North America	8%	11%	8%	5%	8%	6%
Latin America	2%	4%	7%	39%	3,5%	3%
Oceania	4%	2%	3%	1%	0,5%	1%
Africa	3%	4%	6%	4%	3%	2%

ICOM has 118 National Committees and members come from 138 different countries and territories. Currently, about 83% of ICOM members live or work in Europe, nevertheless, figures from previous ICOM General Conferences have shown that it can attract ICOM members and non-members from both the host country's neighbouring countries and from the region.

Date and duration

The ICOM General Conference can be held between May and the beginning of November. It is a seven (7) day event.

When proposing dates, the applicant must ensure that the conference dates do not overlap with major public holidays in the host country or in other parts of the world, or major meetings and events in the host city.

The International Symposium takes place over two (2) days and shall be held one (1) year

prior to the General Conference.

Financial data

The budget for the ICOM General Conference is three (3) to five (5) million EUR. Based on recent experience, General Conference revenues are primarily generated by:

- Government subsidies (accounting for between a third and half of the total income)
- Registration fees (accounting for between a quarter and half of the total income)
- Private sponsorship (both direct and in-kind, varies from year to year)
- Scholarships for travel grants obtained by ICOM (around 100,000 EUR for each General Conference)

Rental of museum trade fair booth-space and special event tickets (marginal revenue)

Registration category and policy fee Admission to the ICOM General Conference is subject to an attendance fee.

It is envisaged that there will be eight (8) registration categories, each with different benefits that will determine the fee.

A description of each registration category and the corresponding benefits is outlined below, and this information should be taken into consideration when the fee policy for the conference is being developed.

Weekly passes

1) ICOM Individual Member – 7-day pass

2) ICOM Institutional Member – 7-day pass

The 7-day pass includes admission to the scientific and social programme, the ICOM statutory meetings, the Open Forum for Resolutions, the Museum Fair and Expo Forum, the ICOM Executive Board and Advisory Council Elections, one off-site meeting and one excursion, as well as lunches and coffee breaks.

The registration fee for individual and institutional ICOM Members shall be divided into two subcategories: Category 1,2 Countries and Category 3,4 Countries as defined by the ICOM Classification of countries ¹.

3) Student - 7-day pass

This 7-day pass is available to students currently enrolled in a university course in the museum and/or cultural heritage field.

To qualify for this discount, students must provide an enrolment letter from their university.

The pass includes admission to the scientific and social programme and the Museum Fair and Expo Forum.

4) Non-Members – 7-day pass

This pass includes admission to the social and scientific programme and the Museum Fair and Expo Forum.

5) Accompanying Person – 7-day pass

An accompanying person is a spouse, friend or young person (16 years or older – provided that they have been expressly authorised by their legal representative and are

¹ <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Call-for-dues-2020-EN-5-7.pdf>

accompanied by the person designated by the legal representative) who is not working in a museum and/or heritage related field. A colleague or associate working in a museum and/or heritage field may not attend the conference as an accompanying person. Only those with an ICOM Individual Member, ICOM Institutional Member or Non-Member 7-day pass may register an accompanying person.

The Accompanying Person – 7-day pass includes admission to the opening and closing parties, the Museum Fair and Expo Forum, the social programme and excursions, as well as lunches and coffee breaks.

Daily passes

6) 3- day pass

The 3-day pass is a ticket for the scientific and social programme on Day 2, 3, and 4. ICOM members and non-members can register under this category. This pass provides access to all events on the selected day(s), including sessions, the Museum Fair, the Opening Ceremony and party, social events, lunches and coffee breaks.

7) 1- day pass

A 1-day pass is a ticket to attend the activities of the scientific and the social programme planned on the selected day, (either Day 2, Day 3 or Day 4).

This pass provides access to all events held on the selected day, including: sessions, the Museum Fair, the Opening Ceremony and party, social events, lunches and coffee breaks.

8) Off-site meeting and excursion tickets

Those who hold a 1-day or 3-day pass can upgrade their tickets to include an off-site meeting and/or excursion ticket.

ICOM General Conference Policy Fee			
Registration categories	Registration periods		
	Early-bird	Advance	On-site
	Between 12 and 6 months before to the event	Between 5 and 1 months and before to the event	On Day 2, Day 3 and Day 4 of the event
ICOM Individual and Institutional Member ² 7-day pass – Category 1 and 2 Countries	Initial rate Ex: 300€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 375€	+50% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 450€
ICOM Individual and Institutional Member ² Weekly pass – Category 3 and 4 Countries	-30% of the initial rate Ex: 210€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 263€	+50% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 315€
Non-members 7-day pass	+30% of the initial rate Ex: 360€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 450€	+50% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 540€
Accompanying Person pass	-50% of the initial rate Ex: 150€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 188€	+50% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 225€
Students – 7 – day pass	-25% of the initial rate Ex: 225€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 282€	+50% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 338€
3-days pass	-20% % of the initial rate Ex: 240€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 300€	+50% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 360€
1-day pass	-60%of the initial rate Ex: 120€	+25% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 150 €	+5% of the initial rate for this category Ex: 180€
Off-site meeting separate ticket ³	To be determined by the host country Ex: 40€	+25% of the proposed rate for this category Ex: 50€	+50% of the proposed rate for this category Ex: 60 €
Excursion separate ticket ³	To be determined by the host country Ex: 60€	+25% of the proposed rate for this category Ex: 75€	+50% of the proposed rate for this category Ex: 90€

² Under the category for ICOM institutional Members, between three to eight members of the staff of an institution can register, depending on the membership fee of the institution (regular I-VI).

³ Exclusively available to those who hold 3-day pass or 1-day passes.

Eligibility

The call for applications to host the 27th ICOM General Conference is open to all active ICOM National Committees.

Admissibility

In order to be considered, each applicant is invited to read carefully the requirements set out in this Call for Applications and to ensure that their application complies with the following requirements:

Applicants are requested to carefully read this manual and ensure that the application meets the following requirements:

- It must be submitted no later than the deadline specified in this Call for Applications;
- It must be written in one of the ICOM official languages (English, French or Spanish) in a clear and concise manner;
- It must include all of the required documents and all sections must be fully completed.

Applications which are incomplete, submitted after the deadline or do not comply with the instructions provided in the Call for Applications will not be considered.

Legal Undertaking

The application must be accompanied by a signed declaration certifying (1) the status of the National Committee as a legal entity, (2) their intention to set up an Organising Committee with legal personality and legal capacity and (3) their ability to carry out the proposed activities.

Applicants must confirm that:

- all the declarations and other commitments contained in the application file are binding for the National Committee and the Organizing Committee in the event that the city in question is chosen to host the ICOM General Conference;
- if the application is successful, the application will be used as a basis for work which may evolve according to the needs and decisions of ICOM.

Application Requirements

The application must include:

- 1) The enclosed questionnaire completed in one of the ICOM official languages (English, French or Spanish) in a clear and concise manner;
- 2) Additional audio-visual materials (optional)

The application must be compiled in a single PDF document not exceeding 5MB, which should be sent to the ICOM Secretariat by email. Larger files or additional audio-visual materials such as films and videos may be sent separately by a file transfer service.

To select the host city for 2025, ICOM must have a clear vision of how the National Committee intends to link the General Conference to ICOM's strategic objectives. ICOM will also consider the efforts (logistical, financial, operational, etc.) that the National Committee is willing to take to ensure the success of the General Conference and to encourage and support the most representative and inclusive participation of the ICOM community. Finally, the overall coherence of the application is essential.

Prepare and submit your application

All the documents required to complete the application process are listed in the Call for Applications. Please be sure to follow the guidelines closely as failure to do so could lead to your application being assessed as inadmissible by ICOM.

Deadline for applications

The applications must be sent by email to the ICOM Secretariat at Conference@icom.museum before 24 May, 2020 (00:00 Paris time: GMT+1). Additional audio-visual documents sent by file transfer must reach the ICOM Secretariat before the deadline.

Pre-selection

A shortlist of candidates will be selected by the ICOM Executive Board in its meeting of 8-9 June 2021 and will be subsequently announced during the 87th session of the Advisory Council.

Site visit and evaluation

Representatives of the ICOM Executive Board, the ICOM Secretariat and/or an independent auditor will visit proposed venues for the General Conference in the shortlisted host cities during the last trimester of 2020 and an evaluation report on each of the prospective host cities will be prepared.

Each application will be evaluated based on the application criteria and the results of the site visit. The outcome of the evaluation will be presented to the members of the Advisory Council in June 2021, before the vote to recommend the host city for the 27th ICOM General Conference.

Presentation and final decision

The selected city hosts will be invited to present their candidacy to the Advisory Council at ICOM Annual Meetings in June 2021 Council using brochures, reports, videos or PowerPoint presentation.

Following the presentations by the potential host cities, the Advisory Council will vote on a recommendation for the host city of the 27th ICOM General Conference 2025. The recommendation will then be submitted for approval by the Executive Board in June 2021.

Signing of the Agreement

An agreement defining the roles and responsibilities of ICOM, the local organising committee and the PCO for the General Conference will be signed by all the Parties in 2021. ICOM will prepare this agreement.

Timeframe

By 24 May 2020	Deadline for submitting applications to host the 27 th ICOM General Conference 2025 (00:00 Paris time: GMT+1)
By 11 June, 2020	Shortlisting of candidates to host the General Conference 2025
During the last trimester of 2020	Site visit of the candidate's proposed host city for the General Conference 2025
June 2021	Recommendation on the host city for the ICOM General Conference 2025 will be voted on by the Advisory Council and to be submitted for approval by the Executive Council
In 2021	The Agreement on the organisation and hosting of the 27 th ICOM General Conference is signed.

INSTRUCTIONS AND LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS FOR THE APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Only complete applications which fulfil all the requirements and are submitted before the deadline in PDF format will be accepted. Applicants will receive an email confirming receipt of their application. The confirmation of the receipt of the application does not imply that the application is eligible and/or admissible.

Structure of the Application Questionnaire

The application questionnaire has ninety (90) questions grouped into eight (8) sections, each relates to a key aspect of the organization of the ICOM General Conference:

1. Section 1: Host (13 questions);
2. Section 2: Support (6 questions);
3. Section 3: Theme and programme (5 questions);
4. Section 4: Venue (25 questions);
5. Section 5: Travel, accommodation and on-site reception (13 questions);
6. Section 6: Budget and finance (14 questions);
7. Section 7: Communication (8 questions);
8. Section 8: Collaboration (6 questions);

Supporting information for completing the questionnaire is available in the appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Previous and upcoming ICOM General Conferences and International Museum Days
- Appendix 2 - General technical requirements
- Appendix 3 - Travel and accommodation requirements for the International Symposium and 27th ICOM General Conference
- Appendix 4 - Provisional schedule 2023-2026 for the planning, organisation and coordination of the 27TH ICOM General Conference
- Appendix 5 - Extract from the ICOM graphic chart

Advice on filling out the application questionnaire

The application must be named as follows:

- Application Title: “candidate city, national committee” (e.g. “Kyoto_ICOM Japan”)
- Name the application file with the candidate city and National Committee (e.g. “Kyoto_ICOM Japan”)
- Name the attachments with candidate city and National Committee and the question number (e.g. Kyoto_ICOMJapan_7.2.1)

Below the list of supporting documents, there is the blank application questionnaire with sample lists and tables.

Questions to be answered in the application questionnaire are preceded by a “Q”. The information in square brackets [...] indicates the form that answers should take, in several categories:

- Explanatory: textual explanation.

- List, chart, graphics: numbers and statistics with a brief description
- Floor plan, seating plan, photos, map/visual support
- Budget: estimated draft budget with breakdown
- Schedule: timeline outlining tasks and objectives

Supporting documents

Please ensure that the following documents are included with your application:

1. Legal Undertaking

- The original version of the signed copy of the Legal Undertaking

2. Letters of support and guarantees

- Original letters of support from relevant government authorities and bodies (accompanied by their official translation in English or French)
- A Financial guarantee from the relevant authorities covering any potential economic deficit of the Organising Committee (original and translation in English or French)

3. Programmes

- Statement on the theme of the General Conference
- Proposed scientific programme of the General Conference
- Proposed social programme of the General Conference

4. Map of the city and public transport

- Location of the main venue for the General Conference on a map of the city showing the facilities within or near the conference venue
- Location of the other venues for the meetings of the International Committees and for networking events
- Location of the closest international airport and rail station on the city map and the distance from the city centre to the conference venue
- Location of recommended hotels on the city map
- Location of the hotel(s) for the Executive Board members and the ICOM Secretariat
- A map of public transport

5. Floor plans

- Floor plans of the conference centre for each level that the event will take place, the functions planned for each area, the breakout rooms and a seating plan of the auditorium
- Separate floor plans for the Museum Fair area and for the registration area

6. Budgets

- A provisional four-year budget for the period 2021-2025 with a detailed breakdown in EUR. The budget must identify the revenues and the expenditures. Income will include but will not be limited to: public grants and subventions, registration fees, rental fees for exhibition stands at the Museum Fair, donations and sponsorship
- Expenses will include but are not limited to: organisational costs, venues and technical equipment fees, staff costs, promotional costs, food and beverages
- A separate budget estimate for the travel grants

7. Schedule

- A month-by-month schedule for the organisation of the General Conference from June 2021 until the conference date in 2025

8. Marketing plans

- A marketing plan specifying the events and or activities that you intend to obtain sponsorship for and a draft budget with a detailed breakdown;
- A marketing plan for the international promotion of the General Conference;
- A marketing plan for the promotion of the Museum Trade Fair.

9. Logo of the 27th ICOM General Conference

- A draft logo design for the General Conference